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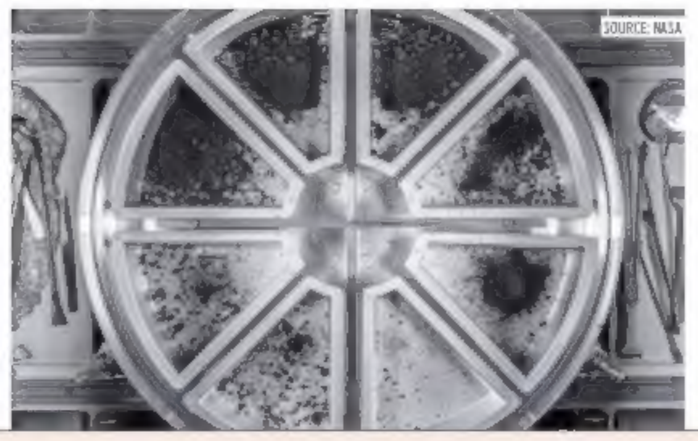

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ASTEROID BENNU HAS BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE, SAY SCIENTISTS

Bennu's sample show presence of glycine, the simplest amino acid, and a crucial ingredient of proteins, according to a report in Live Science

WATER MINERALS FOUND IN THE SAMPLE

The sample also has other water-bearing minerals such as carbonates, sulphites, olivine and magnetite, leading to a tangible evidence that Bennu's parent body witnessed multiple water-related episodes before fragments coalesced into the asteroid, the report says. Scientists also found a reservoir of magnesium phosphate, a rare find in astromaterials

DID EARTH GET WATER FROM OUTER SPACE?

- Scientists have found abundant water-altered compounds called phyllosilicates, which may have been the cradles for organics, water that scientists suspect were delivered to Earth early in its history
- Sample of Bennu was brought by NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission in a protected capsule in 2023 and kept in Houston where study is on

700 MN

YEARS AGO BENNU COULD HAVE BROKEN OFF FROM A LARGER ASTEROID

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Hindu activists take out a protest rally demanding the arrest of all those who assaulted a shopkeeper, in Bengaluru on Tuesday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

SC gives govt 2 weeks to respond to petitions seeking stay on CAA rules

Directs the Centre to file its reply by April 2; matter to come up before court again on April 9

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to stay the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules sought by a batch of petitioners, but directed the Centre to file its reply by April 2.

"We are not expressing any prima facie view. We have to hear the petitioners, we have to hear the other side," said the bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta initially sought four weeks time to reply and clarified that the law "does not take away citizenship of any person".

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Indian Union Muslim League, questioned the urgency to notify the rules four years after CAA was passed.

The Act was passed in December 2021 but the rules giving effect to the law were notified only on March 11, 2024.

"We are not expressing any prima facie view in the matter," the bench said, while posted the matter to April 9.

During the hearing, the petitioners sought a stay on the grant of citizenship under CAA to persons belonging minority communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who came to India before December 31, 2014. The petitioners say CAA discriminates against Muslims and violates Article 14 of the Constitution.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, also appearing for the petitioners, said the government should not grant any citizenship under the rules while the matter is pending before SC.

Sibal concurred, saying that under international law, "once citizenship is granted, you cannot take it back".

Advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, said Muslims left out of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will be prejudiced.

Mehta strongly objected to this, saying: "An effort was made earlier outside this court to mislead people that they will be ousted. The NRC is not an issue before this court."

VOTING RIGHTS

When senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, appearing for a Hindu immigrant from Balochistan, wondered how will anyone be affected or anyone's rights be violated if his client is granted citizenship, senior advocate Indira Jaising said: "Because they will get the right to vote."

Ramdev in SC cross-hairs as bench orders his presence

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday directed Yoga guru Baba Ramdev and Patanjali Ayurved managing director Acharya Balkrishna to appear before it during the next hearing as the company failed to file its reply to an earlier notice on violating an undertaking on misleading advertisements and hauling it up for contempt of court.

Senior lawyer Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Patanjali and Ramdev, strongly objected to the observations and remarks by the bench. "How does Ramdev come into the picture in the case," he asked. Rohatgi claimed that the violation of the law (by the contemnors) was not contempt of court and what was being relied on in open court has to be recorded in the order.

But the two-judge bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah passed the order for personal appearance of Ramdev and Balkrishna in the next hearing.

'Hanuman Chalisa' row: BJP holds stir, 2 more arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A day after a shopkeeper was beaten up by six persons for reportedly playing 'Hanuman Chalisa' during 'Azaan', several BJP leaders staged a protest at Siddanna Street in Nagarathpet, where the incident took place, on Tuesday.

Senior party leaders, including Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje, Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya, Bengaluru Central MP PC Mohan, former minister and Rajajinagar MLA S Suresh Kumar and around 40 BJP workers, were detained and taken into preventive custody by the police.

As protests escalated with hundreds of BJP gathering on the narrows Siddanna Street, a heavy police deployment was made to prevent any untoward incident. Most shops and commercial establishments in the area were shut and there was a bandh-like situation in the locality. BJP workers raised 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans and chanted 'Hanuman Chalisa', demanding an impartial probe into the case.

A heated argument ensued between the police and the BJP workers when the police detained the leaders. Karandlaje slammed the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government in Karnataka, terming it 'anti-Hindu'. She said a youth is attacked for playing 'Hanuman Chalisa', pro-Pakistan slogans are raised in Vidhana Soudha and a miscreant splashes acid on minor girls. But in all these cases, no action has been taken, she said, adding that the law and order situation in the state has collapsed. At the same time, the Congress government is appeasing minorities, she alleged. She also demanded the resignation of Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara.

Tejasvi Surya said that over 5,000 people took part in the protest demanding action against those who assaulted the shopkeeper on Sunday. P4

MODEL CODE VIOLATION

Ballari officials seize chilli worth ₹15 lakh

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Ballari

WITH the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections in place, Ballari and Vijayanagar district administration officials have seized chilli worth Rs 15 lakh in the last two days after farmers failed to produce e-way bills.

As per election rules, people transporting agriculture produce and other goods from one place to another have to produce proper documents.

Fearing such issues, deputy commissioners of Ballari and Vijayanagara last month held meetings with farmers, especially chilli growers, instructing them to carry e-Way bills while transporting their produce. Now that many checkposts have been set up ahead of the elections to curtail the movement of cash, liquor and other poll allurements to win over voters illegally, all vehicles are being checked thoroughly.

The district administration officials have again instructed farmers and merchants to carry all the documents to avoid trouble. P5

EXPRESS READ

RCB tweaks its name to make it Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Indian Premier League team, RCB, has changed its name from Royal Challengers Bangalore to Royal Challengers Bengaluru. RCB captain Faf du Plessis, RCB women's team skipper Smriti Mandhana and batting icon Virat Kohli on Tuesday unveiled the new logo and the new jersey of the team | P2

Lokpal orders CBI probe against Mahua Moitra

New Delhi: The Lokpal on Tuesday asked the CBI to investigate the cash-for-query allegations against TMC leader Mahua Moitra and submit its findings within six months. The allegations against Moitra are extremely serious in nature and a deeper probe is required, the Lokpal's order said | P9

Zomato launches exclusive fleet for pure veg

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

ONLINE food delivery company Zomato on Tuesday announced the launch of a vegetarian-only delivery service to cater to those who prefer ordering from pure-veg restaurants.

The new feature will see a phased rollout across the country in the next few weeks.

The 'Pure Veg Fleet' will have green coloured delivery boxes. Zomato's CEO Deepinder Goyal cited feedback from vegetarian customers as the reason for the launch of the new service. He said the new vertical is for customers who follow a 100% vegetarian diet and that the firm will not discriminate against anybody on the basis of the delivery person's dietary choices.

The pure veg vertical will handle orders from restaurants that serve only pure vegetarian food and will exclude those that serve non-veg food items as well.

Paras exits NDA, but BJP draws Sita Soren, ex-US envoy Sandhu

RAMASHANKAR AND MUKESH RANJAN @ Patna/Jharkhand

A day after announcing its seat-sharing formula for Bihar, the NDA lost an ally though it had already accommodated the rival faction. There were rumblings within the JD(U) as well as its general secretary put in his papers.

Union minister Pashupati Kumar Paras on Tuesday resigned from the Union ministry as the rival LJP led by Chirag Paswan was given five seats in the NDA, including the prestigious Hajipur, for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in Bihar. Paras accused the BJP of doing injustice to his LJP faction by excluding it from the seat-sharing deal.

Tej Pratap Yadav, elder son of RJD chief Lalu Prasad, offered to accommodate Paras in the opposition alliance. "We will be the first to welcome him (Paras)," he said. Paras though was cautious. "We will seek the opinion of party workers before taking the call on a new pre-poll alliance," he said. As for the JD(U), national general secretary Mohammad Ali Asaraf Fatmi resigned from all posts of the party. He is likely to join the RJD on Wednesday and could be fielded as candidate either from Madhabani or Darbhanga.

In Jharkhand, Shibu Soren's daughter-in-law Sita Soren resigned from the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and joined the BJP. Sita represents Jama in the state assembly. She alleged the at the JMM was isolating her and hatching a conspiracy against her family members. Sita is the widow of Durga Soren, the eldest son of Shibu Soren. The BJP's acquisitions continued with former Indian ambassador to the United States, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, joining the party amid buzz on fielding him in the Lok Sabha polls from Amritsar in Punjab.

Pashupati Kumar Paras

Sita Soren

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Lalbagh finds it tough to water its 18K plants

MOHAMMED YACOOB @ Bengaluru

WITH summer peaking early and water sources yielding less water, the famed Lalbagh Botanical Garden in the city is facing difficulties maintaining 18,000 plants and trees of over 3,000 species spread across its massive 240-acre expanse.

Lalbagh authorities said the fluctuating power supply has impacted the operation of its 1.5 Million Litres per Day (MLD) sewage treatment plant (STP). Also, five borewells in the garden are giving less water.

Lalbagh Botanical Gardens Joint Director M Jagadeesha told *The New Indian Express*, "Normally, the summer months from March to April-end are considered critical for the horticulture department. Some plants and small trees require more water during this season.

CONTINUED ON: P2

FLATS, HOTELS MUST FIX TAP AERATORS BY MAR 31

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has directed apartment complexes, industries and luxury hotels to fix aerators in taps by March 31 to avoid wastage of water. If they fail to do so, BWSSB will take steps to install aerators and owners will have to bear the installation cost | P2